The Crafty MILLER; or, Miſtaken BATCHELOR

PART I.

YOU gallants of ENGLAND, I pray now draw near,
And a comical ſtory to you I will tell;
'Tis of a rich batchelor now I do write.
Who had ſtore of riches his heart to delight;
But among his livings my author can tell,
He had in poſſeſſion a fine water-mill.
And in it an honeſt poor miller did dwell,
Who by his juſt dealings to poverty fell.
For fortune did frown, as it doth appear,
He could pay to no rent for the ſpace of two year:
But the landlord was civil, and made no great ſtriſe,
Becauſe the miller had a handſome wife.
One morning the landlord comes to the mill,
Saying, Miller, good-morrow: is your wife well?
Yes, ſir, ſays the miller, ſhe's hearty I think,
But grieved becauſe ſhe can pay you no chink;
But if you'll have patience, as I am a man,
I will give you the rent, ſir, as ſoon as I can.
Prithee, miller, for money I do want none,
Until I do aſk you, you may let it alone;
Come, go to the tavern, it is my deſign,
To give you the ſhare of a bottle of wine.
I have ſomething to ſay, if you'll grant my deſire,
I'll quit you the rent, and make you much higher.
Kind ſir, ſaid the miller, your proffers are high,
I ne'er ſhall be able you to gratify.
Yes, that you may quickly, his landlord reply'd,
With your free conſent I am ſoon ſatisfy'd.
In truth, ſaid the miller, if it can be ſo,
My willing endeavours you ſoon ſhall know.
I thank thee, kind miller, the landlord reply'd.
Being come to the tavern, he merrily cry'd
Come bring us a bottle of wine that is good,
And, miller, if you will but ſtand to your word,
I mean to ſurrender, with heart and good will,
The rent that you owe me, and likewiſe the mill.
And now honeſt miller, my mind I'll diſcloſe,
Altho' 'twill ſeem ſtrange to you I ſuppoſe.
Yet nevertheleſs, the truth to diſcover,
Unto your dear wife I am a briſk lover.
If you will conſent I may lie by her ſide,
I ſhall be the happieſt of men, he cry'd.
Kind ſir, ſaid the miller, I grant thy deſire,
My wife 's at your will when you pleaſe to lie by her.
I ſhoud be the worſt of men, he reply'd
If ſuch a ſmall boon to you was deny'd.
I freely conſent, ſir, you ſhall have your will,
But firſt we'll have writings concerning the mill.
With all my heart, the landlord did ſay,
We'll have them drawn here, without more delay;
And if by your wife any children I have,
I mean to maintain them, rich, fine, and brave.
And when I die, they my ſubſtance ſhall ſhare,
To keep them hereafter, both gallant and fair.
But, ſir, quoth the miller, it will be a jeer,
If that we in public do let it appear;
To ſave both our credits, and bring it to paſs,
I have in the meadow a dainty ſhe aſs.
That will appear better the bond to fill,
For the lend of the aſs you might give me the mill.
Well ſaid, quoth the landlord, that will end the ſtriſe;
But you know my meaning is for your wife:
Yes, ſir, I allow what you ſay is true,
But this ſaves the credit of my wife and you;
It is not ſo much for my wife I do ſtand,
But for you who have proved ſo much my friend.
Now, miller, ſince you have granted me delight,
Pray who ſhall we get the bond to write?
The firſt man we ſee who doth come by,
Who can do the ſame. Then the parſon drew nigh.
The landlord ſaw him, and to him he cry'd,
Here's a matter for you, kind ſir to decide.
If that I can do it, the parſon did ſay,
I'll uſe my endeavours without more delay,
Kind ſir, ſaid the landlord, 'tis a bond to fill,
That I to the miller give a water-mill.
And quit him the rent for two years paſt,
And all for the lending to me his ſhe-aſs.
That is a good act, ſir, the parſon did ſay,
Now, miller, you and yours are bound to pray.
For your landlord's eternal felicity ſure,
Since he has not turned you out of door;
But quits you the rent, and gives you the mill,
Now you may live happy, ſir, if you will.
This ſaid, he to writing the bond did begin,
And the landlord for wine of the beſt did call in;
So the bond being writ, it quickly was ſign'd,
And before all witneſſes it was reſign'd.
To him and his heirs the mill was to paſs,
And all for the lending to me his ſhe aſs.
The miller, the bond in his pocket did put,
Taking leave of him home he did trot;
He whiſtled and ſung all the way he did go.
And when he came home to his wife he did ſhow
The bond, and diſcover'd the matter at large,
Said he, Now, my dear, we are free from the charge.

PART II.

THE gentleman he was as briſk as an eel,
And in his lower teer ſome courage did feel:
Thought he. O my bargain ſome uſe I may lack,
And immediately ſent for his man Jack;
And when he came he gave him a glaſs,
Saying, Go to the miller now for his ſhe-aſs.
And when that is done conduct her ſafe home,
And take her into the very beſt room;
Then maſte her a fire, my orders to compleat,
Give her wine to drink, and fowls to eat;
And when that is done come back and tell me
How ſhe with her delicates ſeem to agree.
Kind ſir, ſaid the ſervant your will ſhall be done,
And down to the miller he haſtily run;
Saying, Miller, ſtrange news is here come to paſs,
My maſter has a mind to your ſhe aſs;
I muſt have her home, and give her good cheer,
And the like of an aſs you never did hear.
The miller ſmiled but nothing he ſaid,
But taking a halter went down to the mead;
And leadi g her up to the ſervant he ſaid,
Take heed with good diet the Aſs you feed;
She is tender Mouth'd, and bones ſhe can't crack,
Pray give her a toaſt well ſoaked in Sack.
The ſervant ſaid, Miller, I doubt there is fun,
But what he has order'd, ſhall ſurely be done;
And leading the Aſs, he homeward did go,
Unto the Houſe keeper, and gave her to know
His maſter's commands, and how it muſt be.
Which ſoon was performed with great decency.
Then ſaid the houſe-keeper unto the maid Beſs,
Pray go to the door and lead in the gueſt,
Come make a briſk fire, and ſweep out the hall,
For now it becomes a ſhe Aſs's ſtall.
But the wine and the fowls we'll keep for our pain,
For our gueſt is dumb and cannot complain.
When this was done, Jack ſaid *I* muſt run,
For I long to ſee the end of the fun;
When he came to his maſter, he whiſpe in's, ſaid,
Sir, all your commands are juſtly obey'd.
Well, how did ſhe take it, his maſter did cry'd?
Is ſhe with good living, my boy ſatisfy'd?
Said Jack, I am ſure ſhe can take nothing ill,
For I think before ſhe ne'er liv'd ſo well;
No matter for that, his maſter did cry.
Was ſhe willing to come? did ſhe not ſeem ſhy?
I could not perceive it, but ſhe was agreed,
For ſhe came along with me with ſpeed.
That's well, ſaid the maſter, my counſel now keep,
I fancy by this, time ſhe wants to ſleep;
Go to the houſe-keeper, bid her make the bed,
With clean holland ſheets, and the beſt coverlid;
Give my love to my Jewel, and deſire her to go
Up into the room, and reſpect to her ſhow.
And farther my Service ſend to the houſe-keeper
I deſire a clean holland ſhift ſhe would give her,
With a ſuit of good pinners pray let her be dreſt,
And when ſhe's in bed let all go to reſt.
But you muſt ſit up, lad, for to let me in,
Now keep but your council, my favour you'll win.

PART III.

SOON homewards Jack run like a Man amazed,
And when he came on the houſe-keeper gazed;
Saying, Madam your charge is come at laſt,
You muſt make the bed, and dreſs up the Aſs
With a fine holland-ſhift, and pinners alſo,
And the beſt of reſpects you unto her muſt ſhow.
The houſe keeper and ſervants laughed amain,
Saying, ſure our Maſter's in a merry vein;
Then the Old Aſs they began to array,
With a fine holland ſhift and pinners ſo gay,
Then hauled her up with her pinners ſo neat,
Into the warm bed laid the lady's four feet.
The Aſs being laid, they all went to reſt,
But now comes the end and cream of the jeſt.
The gentleman having of wine drank his fill,
He homewards return'd with heart and good will,
To embrace the charms of the miller's wife,
Whom he did love as dear as his life.
And being come home he knock'd at the gate
An up Jack aroſe, who for him did wait;
And let in his maſter, who thus to him ſaid,
Jack, 'tis no diſaſter if I go to bed.
Do you think ſhe's aſleep? Yes, ſir, ſo I ſuppoſe,
For it is long ſince ſhe law down to repoſe.
What did the houſe-keeper and ſervant-maids ſay?
Did they my commands moſt freely obey?
Yes, ſir, they did in every degree,
Then I'll go to-bed; ſo good night to thee.
Sir, will you have a candle brought into the room
No, I'll go to-bed by the light of the moon.
When he came in he ſat himſelf down,
Cloſe by the bed ſide when the Aſs gave a groan;
He ſaid, My dear jewel, what are you aſleep?
Into your embraces I quickly will creep,
You know I have bought thee with a free good will
I've forgotton the rent, and gave you the mill,
And if are loving and kind unto me,
This ſhall not be all I will give unto thee.
You ſhall be my Jewel, my love, and delight,
We'll revel all day, and ſport all the night;
So into bed he did tumble amain,
But the Aſs give a kick, and kickt him out again:
What the devil is it in the chamber, ſaid he?
Said Jack, 'Tis the Aſs the miller gave me.
O villain, and worſt of rogues! he cry'd,
For this affront I will be ſatisfy'd.
He went up, and the Aſs down ſtairs did kick,
Saying, Go to your maſter, the ſeed of Old Nick,
When the bed was ſhifted he took his repoſe.
Next morning in wrath to the miller he goes.
Thou rogue of a miller how came it to paſs,
Inſtead or your wife, you ſent me your Aſs.
Said the miller, Kind ſir, do you think that I will
Lett you cuckold me, for the uſe of your mill?
For what have I done I have right on my ſide,
And witneſs ſecure, ſo I thank you beſide.
The gentleman found he was bit of the mill,
And curſing the miller, with hearty good will,
He home return'd to his houſe-keeper, and ſaid,
For your ſmock and pinners you ſhall be paid
Pray all keep you council, ne'er mention this thing,
And for this as-fleſh; I'll not draw writings again.
The Aſs which o'er night he ſent prancing away,
Was found by the neighbours the very next day,
Dreſt up in her pinners like a lady fair,
Which made all the country gaffers to ſtare.
With a fine holland ſmock hung over her hide,
Then they held it convenient the Aſs ſhould be cry'd
The crier being ſent for, to work he did go,
O Yes, he did cry; does any one know
To whom theſe pinners and ſmock does belong.
For this jaid of an Aſs has done them much wrong.
She's a thief, and has ſtole them, 'tis very plain,
And ought to be try'd for her life for the ſame.
The miller came and the Aſs did own.
Saying, for the ſmock and pinners tis known,
They for my wife's wearing were all deſign'd,
By my landlord who is both loving and kind.
So they gave them the miller to give to his wife,
And the Aſs came off, and not try'd for her life.

Printed and Sold at the Printing-Office, in Bow Church-Yard LONDON.